



News Release

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Contact:
Lena Dibble
Tobacco Control Program
(801) 538-6917

“World No Tobacco Day” Calls Attention to Excessive Tobacco Use in Film and Fashion

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Utah’s health advocates want parents and youth everywhere to ask Hollywood to stop doing Big Tobacco’s dirty work. Saturday, May 31 is “World No Tobacco Day,” celebrated globally, and this year’s theme is “Tobacco Free Films, Tobacco Free Fashion. Action!” The focus is to call attention to the role of the fashion and film industry in glamorizing tobacco use. Seventy percent of all top-grossing films contain tobacco use. Several movies currently showing in Utah, such as “Down With Love” and “Chicago,” feature leading characters that smoke. Widespread smoking in the movies is a major pro-tobacco influence, particularly on teens. Research shows that seeing a lot of smoking in the movies triples the odds that a teen will try smoking.

“Big Tobacco has been working behind the scenes in Hollywood for many years to glamorize smoking and promote its product to a global audience,” said Lena Dibble, media liaison for the Utah Department of Health’s Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. “Smoking in the movies is a major pro-tobacco influence, especially for teens, who often mirror their favorite movies’ stars by imitating their actions and behaviors, including smoking.”

Many studios have a history of closed-door partnerships with Big Tobacco. For “Superman II,” Warner Brothers made a deal with Phillip Morris to feature Marlboro cigarettes and edit the film to avoid any negative portrayals of Marlboros. In a 1983 speech to Phillip Morris International Marketers, Hamish Maxwell, president of Phillip Morris International, said “Smoking is being positioned as an unfashionable, as well as unhealthy, custom. We must use every creative means at our disposal to reverse this destructive trend. I do feel heartened at the increasing number of occasions when I go to a

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movie and see a pack of cigarettes in the hands of the leading lady. We must continue to exploit new opportunities to get cigarettes on screen and into the hands of smokers.”

These days leading characters light up in more than nine out of ten films, and one fifth of kids’ movies feature smoking. Anti-tobacco advocates want to encourage filmmakers and the fashion industry to put an end to misleading portrayals of tobacco use as glamorous, fun, or attractive, and to recognize their responsibility as role models.

“Kids don’t realize that current movie heroes are three times more likely to smoke than people in real life,” said Dibble. “When viewing a movie that includes smoking, parents can use it as a teaching moment. Draw attention to the fact that movies are fantasy and they make everything look more glamorous than it is in real life.”

Pamela I. Clark, PhD, at Northeastern Ohio University’s College of Medicine, has created a list of points based on research conducted with kids and parents, that parents can use to help talk to their kids about smoking.

Tips include:

- Don't assume kids will learn to be smoke-free at school
- Let them know how you feel about smoking
- Remember, kids do listen, although they may feel a need to rebel at first
- Be a good role model and don’t smoke, or explain that you know it's a bad habit and ask them to help you quit
- Limit their ability to buy cigarettes
- Enlist the support of extended family to keep kids smoke free
- Don't believe that smoking is safer than "something else"
- Remember, it's never too late to intervene.

For more information and statistics on tobacco use in film and fashion visit (www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu).

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